

THE THREE CAMELS

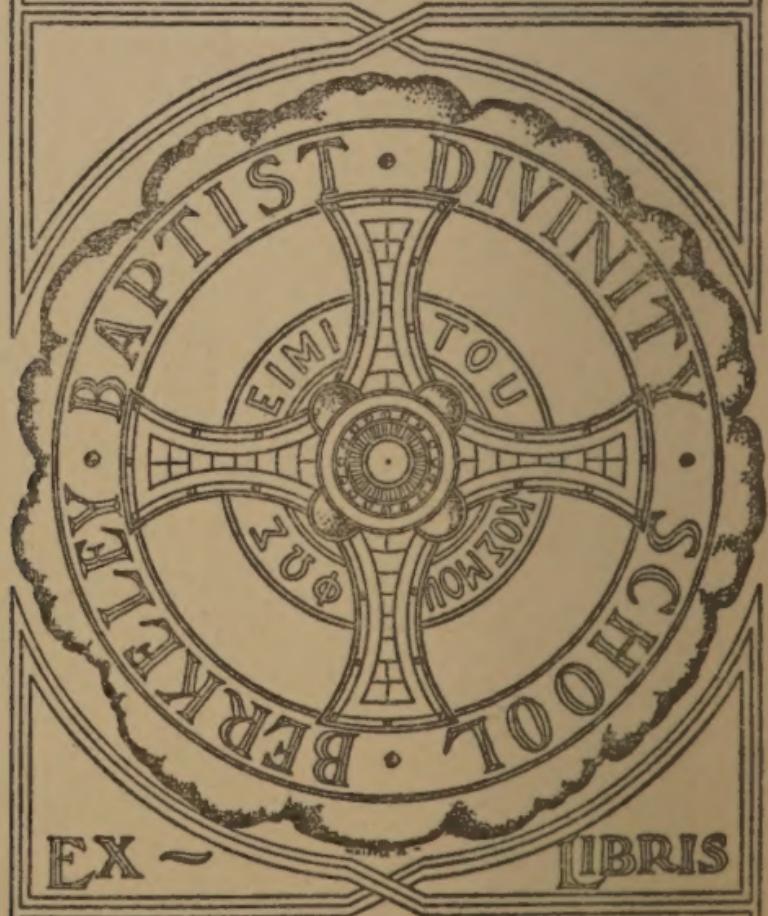
A Story of India



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THE THREE CAMELS.



Printed in the United States of America

The Three Camels

A STORY OF INDIA

By ELSIE HELENA SPRIGGS



Pictures by Elsie Anna Wood

FRIENDSHIP PRESS • NEW YORK

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Once upon a time in India
there were three toy camels
painted yellow and brown and
green—a big camel,

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—a middle-sized camel,



—and a very little camel.



T hey all stood in a row on the shelf of a very little shop.



The shop was kept by a very old man with a very bright smile. He sold lots of toys—drums and tops and rattles and balls, but he liked the three painted camels best, and he kept them all by themselves on a front shelf.





One day the old man smiled more than ever, because he saw coming towards the stall a little girl and her nurse.



The little girl was dressed in green and gold, and she had a gold chain round her neck and gold bangles round her arms and ankles, and her cheeks were a lovely brown color. Her name was Sita.¹

¹ It rhymes with our name Rita.



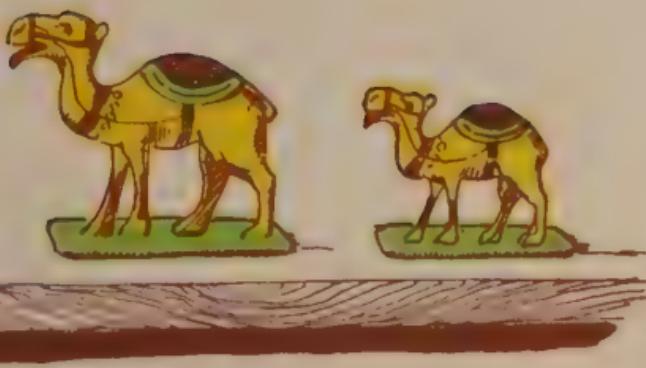
When she saw the old man by the toy stall, she smiled at him, and when she saw the three painted camels all in a row, she stopped and clapped her hands. “Oh, Nurse,” she said, “please buy me a camel, the beautiful big one!”



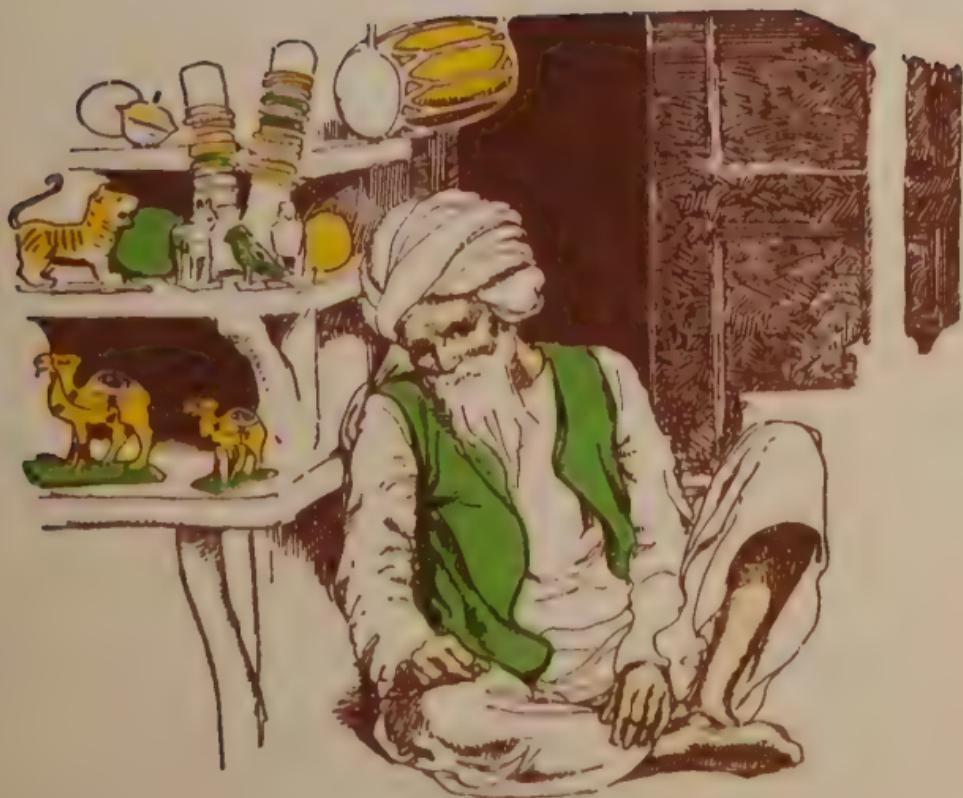
So when Nurse had paid, Sita thanked the old man and took the big camel home tucked under her arm.



And then there were only two
painted camels left on the
shelf.



The next day the old man was sleeping in the sun. Suddenly he woke up with a jump, for a shrill little voice cried, "Oh, the lovely camels!" And when he opened his eyes, he saw—



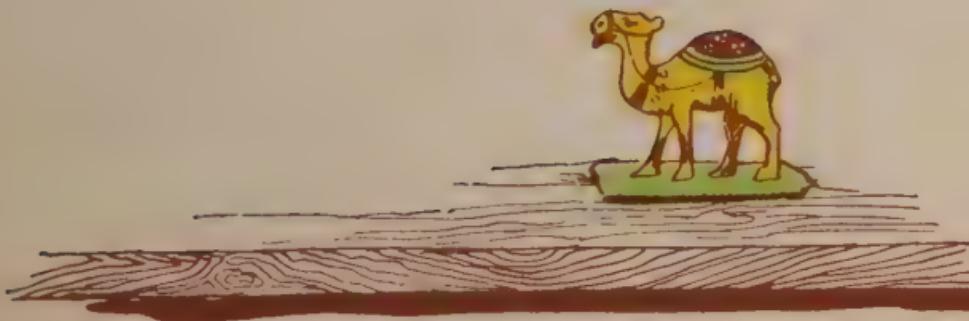
—another little girl, with her mother, standing in front of the stall. This little girl was dressed in white, with a white hat and white shoes, and her cheeks were rosy pink. Her name was Susie.



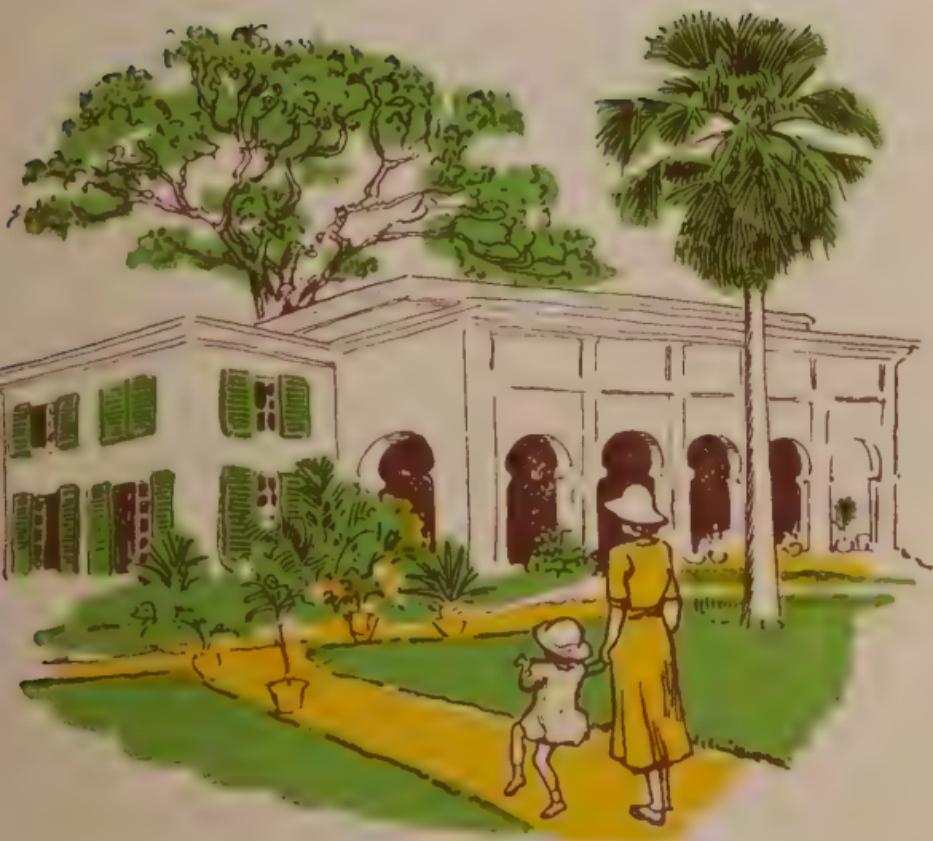
Mother, buy it, buy it!" she cried. "Please, Mother, buy it!" and she pointed at the middle-sized camel. So Mother bought it, and Susie thanked the old man and took the middle-sized camel home tucked under her arm.



And then there was only one little camel left on the shelf.



Now Susie lived in a white house with green shutters and a big shady veranda which was the loveliest place in the world in which to play.





One corner was made into a home for the dollies, and another into a little shop like the toy stall where the painted camel was bought, and in a third corner Susie was building a house with her bricks where the middle-sized camel could live. Just as she was putting on the roof, she heard someone coming up the steps of the veranda, and who do you think it was?



Why, the little girl dressed in green and gold! One day every week Sita came with her nurse to play with Susie, and this day she was carrying the big camel tucked under her arm.

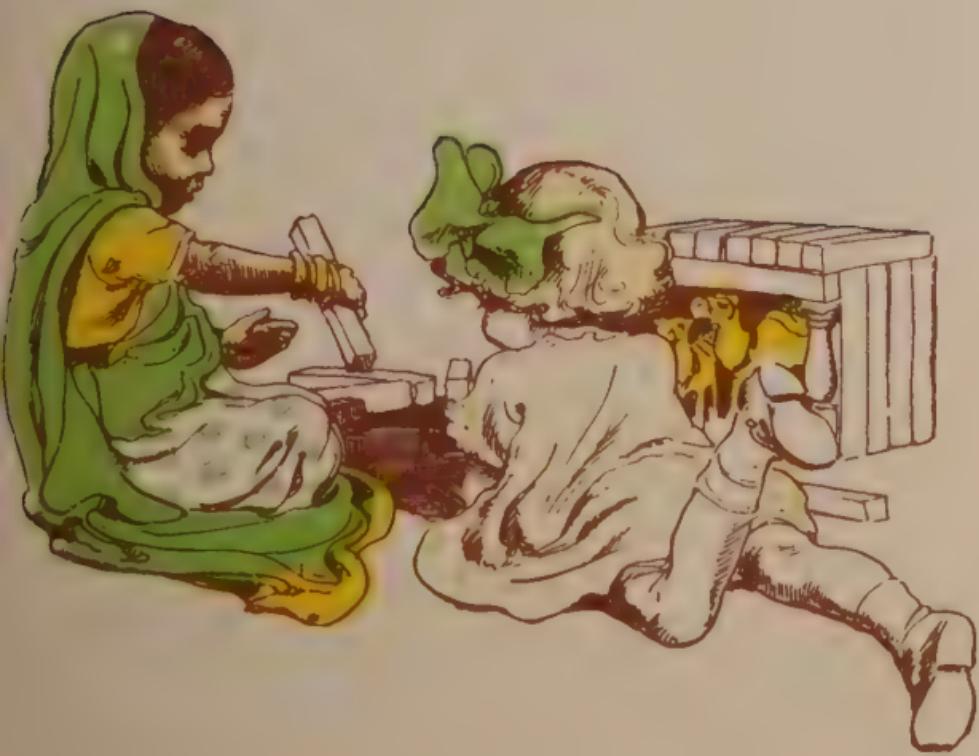




h!” cried Susie. “I have a camel like that! I am building a house for him. He is smaller than yours. Let’s build a house for your big camel as well. What is his name?”

“He has no name yet,” said Sita. “Ginger would be a nice name for him,” said Susie. “I call mine George.”

So they built a house for Ginger and George.



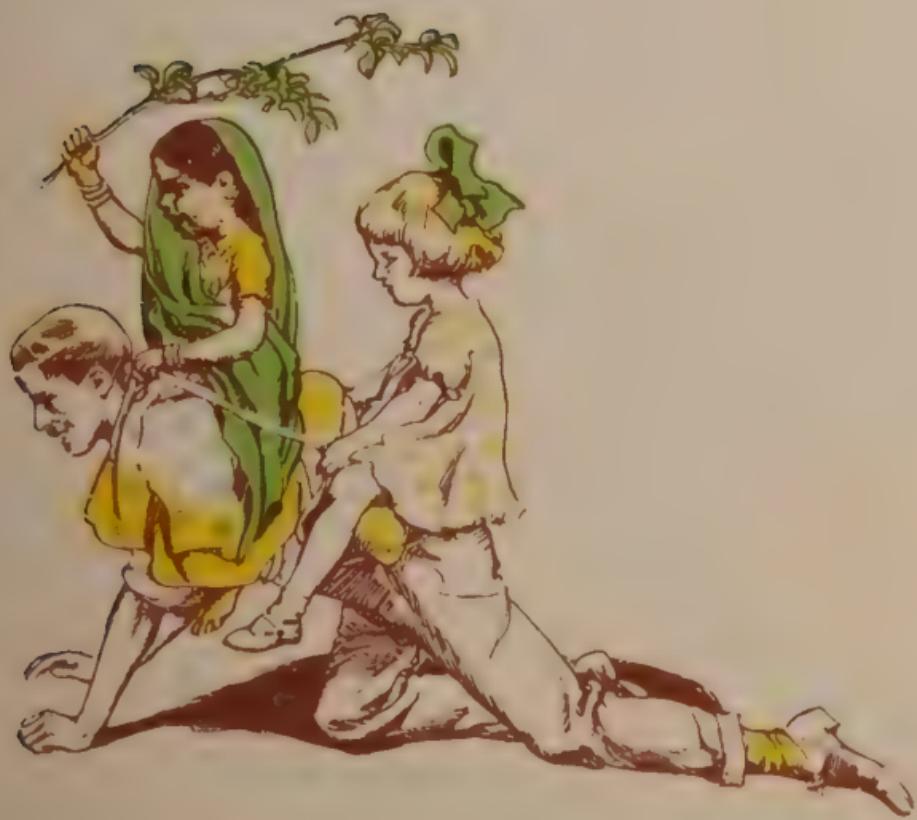
Then they made some long reins out of the creeper which grew over the veranda and harnessed up Ginger and George.

“Now we must have a cart,” said Sita.

“I’ll find one,” said Susie, and she ran to her toy box and found the half of a coconut shell. It had a hole in it, so they tied the reins through the hole, and then they drove the two camels all round the veranda.



Sometimes when Sita came to play, Susie's daddy played with them. Then it was almost as good as having a real live camel, for they tied a cushion on Daddy's back for a hump and put Susie's reins over his head, and Sita sat in front of the hump and Susie at the back and away they went!



By and by Christmastime came around. "Mother," said Susie, "we shall be sure to have a Christmas tree, shan't we?"

"Yes," said Mother, "and we shall ask Sita to come and see it, too."



So on Christmas Day there was a beautiful Christmas tree with sparkling candles and bright toys and a great star shining on the top.



Sita came to see it and brought Ginger with her. Nurse was there and Mother and Susie, with George tucked under her arm.

“Where is your daddy?” said Sita.

“He has gone to the village to see a man who is ill,” said Susie. Just then the door opened, and in came—



—Daddy, carrying in his arms a very little brown girl. She wore a very little yellow jacket, and she was hugging a very little painted camel. “Oh!” cried Susie and Sita together. “The very little camel! What is his name?”

“Gunga,” said the little girl.

“Her father bought him for her at the toy stall,” said Daddy. “Sakena¹ has come to see the Christmas tree because her father is ill.”

¹ Pronounce Sah-KEE-na.



Then Sakena struggled down from Daddy's arms and ran to look at the Christmas tree.



I f you put all the camels on the table," said Mother, "you will be able to help me cut down the toys." So they put Ginger and George and Gunga on the table under the Christmas picture.



Susie looked up at the picture. “Look, there are three camels there,” she said.

“I know that story,” said Sita. “Three Wise Men came riding on their camels to see the Baby Jesus, and they brought him lots of lovely presents, and there was a big star in the sky.”

“There are lots of lovely things on our tree and a big star,” said Susie. “Mother says it is because it is the birthday of the Baby Jesus. Oh, I do hope there is a dolly for me.”

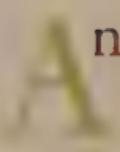


And there was a dolly for each little girl, and a present for everyone else.



You can see them in this picture all dancing round the Christmas tree.



nd then the three little girls
said to
 Ginger and
 George and
 Gunga,
“Hasn’t it been a happy Christ-
mas?”



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